

# **Non-Traditional Student 'Learns' Through KSU Distance Education**

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I'm one of those "older" college students. I began my college career right out of high school in 1986 and dropped out in the spring of 1988. I discovered I wasn't mentally ready for college and didn't do very well in several of my classes. I realized I wasn't mature enough for the challenges of college and being out in the "real world" for the first time in my life.

Well, many years went by. I became a single mother at the age of 23, worked full time at Dillon's Grocery Store and decided I needed to work normal hours, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., so I applied for a job with the state of Kansas. I landed my first job with the Kansas Department of Revenue and then moved to the Kansas Department of Education (KSDE), where I spent seven years. In my second year with KSDE, my former boss asked me point blank if I wanted to be a secretary for the rest of my life and try to support a child on a secretary's salary. She made me realize that I didn't want to be a secretary for my entire working career and that I needed to be a role model for my daughter.

While my daughter was in her second semester of pre-school, I returned to college and took three hours from Highland Community College's outreach program. When my daughter began first grade, I decided to try six hours (two classes) a semester. Lucky for me, I had 29 hours transferred from KSU to Highland, so I was well on my way. In May 2001, I graduated from Highland with an associate of arts degree in business.

To this day, I can't even remember how I heard about the KSU Degree Completion program, which I could do over the Internet. I just remember when I dropped out of KSU in 1988 that my ultimate goal someday, was to graduate from KSU.

I enrolled in my first two classes through the KSU Division of Continuing Education in August 2001. This type of education takes a lot of self-discipline, hard work, and determination. I also had an excellent advisor throughout my college career and she guided me the entire time. Even though I wasn't on-campus, I still had help from instructors and other students. I did miss the classroom setting, but I was so excited to know that I was going to be able to complete my bachelor's degree at home on my own time. Yes, there were many deadlines, but it was nice knowing that I had the ability to make this all happen.

I will never forget the feeling I had as I marched into Bramlage Coliseum on the morning of Dec. 11, 2004 in my cap and gown. My heart was racing and I had a huge grin on my face. My entire family was there to show their continued support as I graduated from KSU. I very proudly knew that my 13-year-old daughter was watching the culmination of nine years of constant challenges in completing my degree and receiving my diploma. What an important moment in my life to know that I had not only completed a life goal, but was able to show my daughter that no matter how old you are, you can do anything you set your mind to.

If anyone is interested in more information about the KSU Division of Continuing Education, check out the Web site, <http://www.dce.ksu.edu>.

I'm proud to say that I bleed purple and white and I'm proud to be a Wildcat!